

Standard 7-6

The student will demonstrate an understanding of international developments in the post-World War II world, including the impact of the Cold War on the world.

7-6.2 Summarize the events of the Cold War, including the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe; the rise of the Communist party in China; the building of the Berlin Wall; the economic and political competition for influence in Vietnam and Korea; the Cuban missile crisis; the revolutionary movements in Africa; the development of new military, nuclear, and space technology; and the threat of nuclear annihilation. (H, P)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In fifth grade, students explained the course of the Cold War, including differing economic and political philosophies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States, the spread of Communism, McCarthyism, the Korean Conflict, the Berlin Wall, the space race, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Vietnam War (5-5.4).

In this course (Grade 7) the previous standard (7-6.1) introduced the roots of the Cold War and some of its concepts.

In Global Studies, students will summarize the ideologies and global effects of Communism and democracy, including the effects of totalitarianism and Communism in China and the effects of Communism in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union (GS-6.1). Students will also summarize the worldwide effects of the Cold War, including the competition for power between the United States and the Soviet Union, the changing relationships between the Soviet Union and China, the response by popular culture, and the collapse of the communist states (GS-6.2). Students will also compare the challenges and successes of the movements toward independence and democratic reform in various regions following World War II, including the role of political ideology, religion, and ethnicity in shaping governments and the course of independence and democratic movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (GS-6.3).

In US History, students will summarize the origins and course of the Cold War, including the containment policy; the conflicts in Korea, Africa, and the Middle East; the Berlin Airlift and the Berlin Wall; the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis; the nuclear arms race; the effects of the “Red Scare” and McCarthyism; and the role of military alliances (USHC-9.2). Students will also summarize the key events and effects of the Vietnam War (USHC 9-3).

It is essential for students to know how the Soviet Union came to dominate Eastern Europe during the Cold War, splitting Europe into two regions: a democratic Western Europe and a communist Eastern Europe (see 7-6.1). Prime Minister Winston Churchill aptly began the use of the phrase “behind the iron curtain” to describe the area of the continent under communist control.

The difference in living conditions between East and West Berlin and East and West Germany due to the lack of many consumer goods, subsequently led to a much lower standard of living in the communist sectors. This inequity between East and West caused many defections from the East to the West, especially in Berlin. Consequently, the Berlin Wall was built in 1961 by the Communists in East Berlin in order to prevent people from going to West Berlin. The Berlin Wall symbolized the iron curtain that separated the democratic West from the communist East.

World War II also strengthened the power of the Communist party in China. During the war, the noncommunist Nationalists and the Communists were forced to fight the Japanese together, however, both groups were also focused on vying for political power within China. The Communists, led by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung), used guerilla warfare against the Japanese. They were successful in appealing to the Chinese peasants in the villages that they controlled in northern China because they assisted the peasants, teaching them how to read, increasing food production, and limiting the amount of rent that their landlords could charge. The Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, had a large army and controlled most of southwestern China. The Nationalist army was assisted monetarily by the United States, but, corruption among the Nationalist army officials and severe economic problems contributed to the Nationalists' failure to obtain support from the peasants. After the Japanese surrendered, ending WWII, the civil war in China between the Nationalists and Communists resumed (1946), ending three years later with a Communist victory. The Communists took over China in 1949, renaming it the Peoples Republic of China with Mao Zedong as its leader. Chiang Kai-shek and his fellow Nationalists fled to Taiwan and called their country the Republic of China. The United States refused to recognize the communist government of mainland China and instead recognized the exiled Nationalist Chinese as the official government of all of China until 1972, when the existence of two different governments was acknowledged.

It is important for students to understand how the Korean War was part of the Cold War. After the Japanese were driven out of Korea, the peninsula was divided into two parts at the 38th parallel, each backed by a different Cold War leadership: the northern region was communist and the southern region was not. The Korean War began in 1950 as North Korea invaded South Korea with the hope of uniting the peninsula under one communist regime. The United States, led by President Harry Truman, and the United Nations sent troops to support South Korea. The Soviets assisted the North Koreans by giving them money and weapons, and the Communist Chinese soon joined in sending troops to help North Korea, as well. The war quickly reached a costly impasse and the stalemate ended in 1953, when a cease-fire agreement was signed. Korea remained divided at the 38th parallel, which was made into a demilitarized zone.

It is also important for students to understand how the Vietnam War was a “hot” extension of the Cold War. The French wanted to reassert their control over Indochina after World War II ended, however, the Vietnamese nationalist movement, led by communist leader Ho Chi Minh, was very strong. The United States gave the French money and weapons to fight the Communists because it was afraid that if one Asian country fell to communism, the rest of the region would also become communist. This

idea, known as the **Domino Theory**, became the basis of U.S. foreign policy. However, Ho Chi Minh and his nationalist Communist forces were able to defeat the French in 1954 and achieve independence. After the French were defeated, Vietnam was split into two regions at the 17th parallel: the northern part became communist under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, and the southern part was established as noncommunist and led by Ngo Dinh Diem. The Diem regime, however, was corrupt. Ho Chi Minh, who was very popular in the north, invaded the south in order to unify Vietnam under communist rule. Focused on preventing a communist-takeover, the United States, beginning in the late 1950s and constantly increasing, sent weapons and advisors to South Vietnam. In the mid 1960s under President Lyndon Johnson, American troops were sent to help the South Vietnamese. Not only did the Americans fight the North Vietnamese, they also fought against the Vietcong, who were communists in South Vietnam. The Communists were very successful in their use of guerilla warfare against the United States. The South Vietnamese government did not have the support of the people, and the United States could not achieve a victory. The United States withdrew, and the Communists took over South Vietnam and unified the country under communist rule in 1975. Cambodia and Laos also became Communist, however, the US fear of all Asian countries falling to communism like dominos did not occur.

The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) was another significant Cold War event with the potential of evolving into a nuclear showdown. Fidel Castro had become the communist leader of Cuba in 1959. When an American spy plane flew over Cuba and took pictures of Soviet missiles being assembled on the island, President John F. Kennedy feared the Soviets would use them to attack the United States. Kennedy decided to implement a naval blockade around Cuba and told the Soviets that they would have to remove the missiles. After almost two weeks of intense maneuvering and negotiations at the United Nations and between the US and USSR while the world fearfully anticipated nuclear annihilation, both sides made concessions, the missiles were removed, and a direct military confrontation was avoided.

Students should also understand how revolutionary movements occurred in Africa during the Cold War. Nationalist movements increased and strengthened after World War II, and countries fought for their independence. Africans wanted to free themselves from the oppressive colonial rule of the Europeans (7-6.4).

The United States and the Soviet Union also competed for global power through their arms and space races. With the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, both countries strengthened their militaries, increased their armaments, and focused on the buildup of nuclear weapons. Both countries developed hydrogen bombs in the 1950s. The Soviets were the first to launch a satellite (*Sputnik*) into space in 1957. In response to the Soviet lead, the United States strengthened its math and science educational programs and created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), soon launching its own satellite into space. The Americans were the first to land on the moon in 1969. Both the arms and space races continued to escalate until the Cold War's end in 1989.

It is not essential for students to know details of the battles that took place during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Assessment Guidelines: Appropriate assessment should require students to **summarize** major events of the Cold War. Students should be able to **explain** how the Soviet Union dominated Eastern Europe, and how the Berlin Wall became the symbol of the Cold War. Students should be able to **explain** how the Communists gained power in China and other parts of East Asia and **analyze** the reasons why the United States and Soviet Union were involved in Korea and Vietnam. Appropriate assessment should include an **analysis** of how the space and arms races were a major part of the Cold War.